UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1799
22 December 1994

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council expresses concern at escalation of violence in Burundi, citing danger to stability of sub-region; calls on all concerned to refrain from violence and to respect 10 September Convention of Government.

+ Special Representative Akashi and UNPROFOR Force Commander meet with Bosnian parties in Sarajevo and Pale; formal signing of cease-fire agreement expected tomorrow.

+ Liberian factions conclude peace agreement in Accra; cessation of hostilities to take effect on 28 December.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee recommends General Assembly appropriate $352.5 million for UNOSOM II, UNIFIL, UNDOF, International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia, and United Nations human rights programmes.

+ United Nations appeals for $70.3 million to fund emergency relief and rehabilitation activities in Somalia for next six months.

+ WFP says it will need 127,500 metric tons of food aid, at cost of $65 million, to assist 1.2 million Angolans in 1995.

* * *

The Security Council today expressed concern at the escalation of violence in Burundi, saying it threatened to further destabilize the country and could endanger the stability of the sub-region. In a statement read out by its President, Manzi Bakuramutsa (Rwanda), the Council called on all concerned to refrain from violence. It supported the efforts of the Burundi authorities in seeking to ensure that those committing or inciting acts of violence were held accountable for their actions, and that the militias still operating in the country were disarmed.

The Council encouraged the Government of Burundi and all others concerned, particularly the army, to respect and support the Convention of

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Government of 10 September. They could thus avoid jeopardizing the delicate balance and relative stability in place since the Convention's implementation. It welcomed continuing efforts to bring about further political progress in the country, and underlined the importance of resolving all outstanding issues through dialogue, on the basis of the agreements reached thus far by the political parties. The Council urged all sides to reject confrontational tactics, violence and extremism, and to work towards compromise and conciliation in a spirit of national unity which transcended ethnic origins.

* * *

Special Representative Yasushi Akashi and General Bertrand de Lapresle, Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), met today with the Bosnian Government in Sarajevo, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The Government asked for minor revisions in a draft cease-fire agreement presented by the Special Representative. Mr. Akashi and General de Lapresle later went to Pale to discuss the document with the Bosnian Serb leadership, and were expected to have a further meeting with the Government in Sarajevo in the morning.

The spokesman said the draft agreement was expected to be signed tomorrow morning. It provides for a cease-fire to take effect at noon tomorrow, to be followed as soon as possible by talks on a cessation of hostilities to take effect on 1 January. Meanwhile, shelling was reported in the Bihac pocket today, and in Zepa and Gorazde yesterday.

* * *

The warring Liberian factions yesterday concluded a peace agreement in Accra, Ghana, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was taking a cautious approach, but was encouraged by the fact that, for the first time, all of the factions had signed an agreement.

The agreement calls for a cessation of hostilities as of 28 December, the seating of a new transitional government within two weeks, disarmament of combatants, and the eventual holding of elections. UNOMIL has about 80 military observers in Liberia. The deployment was reduced by the Secretary-General, with the Security Council's approval, from an authorized strength of 368 in September.

* * *

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has recommended that the General Assembly appropriate $352.5 million for three peace-keeping operations in Africa and the Middle East, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and United Nations human rights programmes. It took that action yesterday, in approving 12 drafts without a vote.

(more)

The Committee recommended an appropriation of $254 million gross for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) for the period 1 October 1994 to 28 February 1995. It approved $16 million for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period 1 December 1994 to 31 May 1995. For periods beyond that, the Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General to commit up to $2.7 million monthly for six months from 1 June 1995, and apportion the sums among Member States. The Committee recommended $71 million, previously authorized and apportioned by the Assembly, for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period 1 August 1994 to 31 January 1995.

The Committee also recommended $7 million for the International Criminal Tribunal, and $4.5 million to pay for temporary posts in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Office in Cambodia and the Centre for Human Rights. By the terms of two drafts, the Assembly would redeploy some $1 million between sections of the 1994-1995 budget to help Africa's economic recovery and development.

In other actions, the Committee approved drafts to revise the appropriations for the biennium 1990-1991 and 1994-1995 to cover adjustments due to inflation, currency fluctuations and other factors. It would have the Assembly approve a net decrease of $21 million in the appropriations approved for 1994-1995, and a net decrease of $49 million in the estimates of income.

* * *

The United Nations today appealed for $70.3 million for emergency relief and short-term rehabilitation activities in Somalia for the first six months of next year. The appeal covers activities relating to education, the demobilization of combatants, and the provision of food aid to support reconstruction efforts.

The mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) will expire on 31 March 1995, but United Nations agencies have reaffirmed their commitment to continue humanitarian programmes whenever and wherever possible. According to the appeal, "failure to do so will result in a predictable new emergency which will, as in the past, exact a tragic toll in human lives and have severe consequences for stability in the subregion".

The appeal document was prepared by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in close consultation with national and international non-governmental organizations and other intergovernmental organizations active in Somalia. A significant amount of the funding requested will go towards supporting their activities.

* * *

The World Food Programme (WFP) has said that it will need 127,500 metric tons of food aid, at a cost of $65 million, to assist 1.2 million people in

(more)

Angola next year. That estimate, based on a peace scenario that will allow farmers to plant and many displaced people to go home, points to a decrease of 700,000 in the number of people needing food aid this year.

In 1994, the WFP supplied Angolans with more than 200,000 tons of food aid at a cost of $100 million. The Programme has spearheaded humanitarian operations in Angola since war broke out after the elections in October 1992, delivering food aid all over the country, saving many people from hunger, malnutrition and death by starvation.

* *** *